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The President's Daily Brief

15 December 1972

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~~*Top Secret*~~

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Fidel Castro has stated publicly that his willingness to negotiate with the US on hijacking does not signal a desire for reconciliation with Washington. *(Page 1)*

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Further information on the results of West Germany's national election last month points to some interesting trends in West German politics. *(Page 3)*

Somali President Siad apparently has survived the latest challenge to his position, but he nevertheless seems to have lost much of his independent decision-making power. *(Page 4)*

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CUBA-US

Fidel Castro told a rally for visiting Chilean President Allende on Wednesday that air piracy is "a problem that concerns the entire international community," and for that reason Cuba is willing to negotiate with the US to find a solution. He cautioned, however, that these negotiations do not signal a desire for reconciliation with Washington.

Castro added that the conditions necessary for talks on a general improvement in relations with the US are the same as those outlined in his speech of 26 July. In that speech, Fidel demanded an end to the economic blockade, the return of Guantanamo naval base, and the cessation of exile raids. In the speech this week, however, he referred specifically only to the demand for an end of the blockade.

Castro's remarks were presumably based on a belief that time is on his side and that there is no need to compromise his revolutionary image by making concessions to the US. He undoubtedly is encouraged by recent successes in Cuba's efforts to normalize its ties with the nations of Latin America.

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WEST GERMANY

Further information on the results of the Bundestag election last month points to some interesting trends in West German politics.

The magnitude of the Social Democratic Party's victory was even greater than originally reported. The SPD not only supplanted the Christian Democratic Union as the largest single party, but also increased its share of the vote in all but one of the ten states. For the first time, the SPD received over 50 percent of the vote in North Rhine - Westphalia, where one third of all voters live. The party also won an astonishing 152 of the 248 directly elected seats--as compared to only 127 in the last previous election in 1969 and only 94 in the 1965 voting.

Analysis of the voting also indicates that several long-standing political axioms did not apply in this election. One had it that, the larger the turnout, the bigger would be the success of the CDU. The opposite occurred. Another, backed up by all pre-election polls, was that women would vote largely for the CDU. The SPD won more votes from women than did the opposition. A third was that Roman Catholics would not support the Social Democrats, but the latter scored major inroads in predominantly Catholic areas. It has also been taken for granted that pocketbook issues decide elections, but such issues were apparently overshadowed by foreign policy concerns.

While these results make the SPD's long-run prospects look bright indeed, it is nonetheless true that, in Willy Brandt, the party had a far more attractive leader than did the opposition. The personal factor thus accounts for some of these gains.

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NOTES

Somalia: The government-controlled press and radio are again giving prominent coverage to President Siad, and he apparently has survived the latest challenge to his position. Last week, amid reports of serious discord between Siad and other members of the ruling council, Vice-President Samantar and other council members had eclipsed Siad in the media. Despite his current comeback, Siad seems to have lost much of the independent decision-making power he had managed to wrest from the council in recent months, and we expect the infighting to continue.

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